

THE TOUCH

NO. 1640

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said to Him, You see the multitude thronging You, and say You, Who touched Me?”
Mark 5:30, 31.*

WE just now read the story of this woman who was immediately healed. Spiritual persons know that the miracles recorded by the evangelist are true, because they have seen them reproduced. That is to say, we have not seen an issue of blood stopped by the touch of Christ's garments, but we have seen the spiritual counterpart of it. We have seen men and women healed of all kinds of spiritual and moral diseases by coming into contact with our Lord Jesus. They have touched Jesus, and they have been made whole, for Jesus lives still, and His healing work is not ended, but has only entered on another phase. Jesus has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” and being with us, He is not here inactively or ineffectually, but He is here, the same yesterday, today, and forever, to work the same miracles, only not on men's bodies, but on their souls. Jesus is present to heal leprosies of the mind, and to open the eyes of the understanding. Yes, He is still among us to raise those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Though we live in a great leper house, yet are we comforted because we see that Jesus walks the hospitals, and still heals on the right hand and on the left, all those who come into contact with Him. At the sight of His wonders of grace, we cry out as they did in the days of His flesh, “He has done all things well.”

As the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ are pictures of His wondrous works in the spiritual kingdom, so are they instructive, because they set forth much impressive and precious truth most vividly. Tonight I have but one desire, and that is to lead some poor sin-sick soul to Jesus, and I shall not be satisfied unless very many shall this evening for the first time, break through this crowd and press forward to touch the hem of Christ's robe and find immediate healing.

I shall speak upon three things, first, upon *this wonderful person*, who, if He is but touched, gives out a healing virtue. Secondly, I shall speak upon *that very remarkable touch*, which is clearly a distinct thing from the touch and pressure of the eager, curious crowd. And then we will ask you to answer *the singular personal question* which the Savior puts to this assembly, “Who touched Me?” Perhaps there are some here tonight who will be able to say with trembling assurance, “I touched Him and He has made me whole.” May the Holy Spirit cause it to be so.

I. First, then, I have the blessed work, far beyond my power, but oh, how sweet to my soul, of speaking upon **THIS WONDERFUL PERSON**.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as He stood in the midst of the crowd, was charged with a power which is called by our translators, “virtue.” An efficacious healing force was in Him. Sometimes He emitted it by words, frequently by the touch of His hand, and in this case, it seemed to stream even from His garments when He was but fitly and properly touched. He was charged with omnipotent blessing, and those who came into contact with Him were made whole. Do not think, dear friends, that He is less full of benedictions for the sons of men tonight. No, if I may venture to say as much, He is fuller of healing power, for He has bowed His head to death and worn the crown of thorns, and He has risen from the tomb and gone up into glory leading captivity captive. In our midst at this moment He is, if it is possible, more charged with energy to bless than even when He walked the fields of Palestine, and healed the feeble men and women of His time.

Observe that Christ's power to bless lay mainly in *the fact of His Deity*. That humble, weary, way-worn man was the Son of the Highest. Because He was still very God of very God, His will was omnipotent. He but spoke to fever or leprosy, and they went at His bidding, even as the centurion put it, "I am a man under authority, and I say unto this man, Go, and he goes, and to my servant, Do this, and he does it." Even so, the divine Christ did but will it, and diseases fled at His bidding. He is not less divine today. At this hour He cries, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

But His power to bless us lay also in *the fact that He had become man* for our sake. I speak with lowly reverence, but "it behooved Christ to suffer." He found it necessary to be compassed with infirmities that He might save us from our infirmities. He was able to heal not only because He was God, but because He was Emmanuel, God with Us. Oh, the blessed mystery of the incarnation! What a fount of mercy it is to us miserable sinners! He that spanned the heavens condescended to be wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. He that bears up the pillars of the universe was Himself weary here below, and by His weakness gave us strength. Because He took our sicknesses, therefore is He able to deliver us from spiritual sickness and make us every bit whole. Oh, see, my brethren, God incarnate present among us, "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him."

In addition to this, it is never to be forgotten that our blessed Master, being both divine and human, was also *endowed with the Holy Spirit without measure*. Often are we told in Scripture that He was able to do these mighty signs and wonders, because the Holy Spirit was with Him. Even now that same Holy Spirit is with Him in plenitude of power. Jesus, whom I preach to you, the man of Nazareth, the mighty God, has the residue of the Spirit by which power He can remove from us all the guilt and power of sin, and can make us perfectly whole, that is, holy.

Is not this something to be delighted in—that there should be such a Savior and such a Savior accessible tonight? The blessed physician of souls can heal every sort of spiritual malady. I am able to say that I have seen Him heal such maladies. I think I have been witness to the cure of every sort of sin. At any rate, He is healing me of my own maladies, and I am under His tender care, persuaded that He will make even me perfectly whole before He has done with me. I have seen the proud man, who could not otherwise have been cured of his haughtiness, come and sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him, until he has been made meek and lowly. I have seen the obstinate man come to Jesus and gladly take Christ's yoke upon him, and become willingly and joyfully obedient to the supreme will of Him who bought him with His blood. Often I have seen the unclean and the lascivious enticed to Jesus by His gentleness, and they have been made pure. Now, often have these eyes seen the despairing that have been on the verge of madness cheered and comforted till they have sung for joy of heart. How frequently have I seen the coward made brave, the morose made gentle, the revengeful made forgiving, by coming into contact with Jesus! You cannot love my Lord and love sin. You cannot trust my Lord and yet delight yourselves in iniquity. Only get near to Him, and He will begin a cure upon your character, and before long, will perfect it. If your malady should be a delight in the pleasures and the pursuits of the world, He will teach you not to love the world, or the things of it. Do you suffer from selfishness? He shall teach you to deny yourselves. His lance and nails and cross shall crucify you with Himself till self-seeking shall die. Are you afflicted with a sloth that will not let you be active? My Master's zeal shall fire your soul till, like Him, you shall be consumed with energy. I do not care what your fault is, my brother or my sister, but this I know; there is power in my divine Lord and Master to redeem you from that fault. He can destroy evil and create good. Behold, He makes all things new!

Ah, now, if I were addressing myself to a number of persons that were blind, or deaf, or sick, and I told them that Christ was here to heal them of their bodily infirmities, what a rush there would be. Set Jesus up in Trafalgar Square to be touched by all manner of sick folk, and I guarantee you the crowd would press one another to death in their eagerness to get at Him. But, surely, spiritual maladies are worse. It is worse to have a blind spiritual eye than a blind bodily eye. But men do not think so and consequently they are not anxious for spiritual health. I may praise up my Master, as I gladly would, even to the skies, and yet men will care nothing for Him, for they would just as soon be morally and spiritually sick as not, and some of them are even proud of their sicknesses. Well, what shall become of you? In

that day when God shuts out the spiritually sick folk—the diseased, the pestilential, the putrid, the corrupt—when He casts them into hell because they cannot be permitted to stand among His saints in His holy house in heaven, whose fault shall it be that you were not healed? Who shall bear the blame that you died in your sins? Not the Lord Jesus Christ, but yourselves, because you chose your own delusions, and would have none of Him.

Thus have I feebly tried to set Him forth, and oh, how I would that you desired Him and longed for Him, for He is here, and a touch of Him will save you! Poor souls, must He pass you by?

II. And now, secondly, I want to say a little, by God's help, about THE REMARKABLE TOUCH OF THIS WOMAN.

Such a touch as hers may be given to Jesus at this good hour. We cannot by our finger literally touch His mantle, but there is a spiritual touch that can still be given to Christ, which will draw virtue out of Him, so that all our spiritual diseases shall straightway be healed. This contact is not always described in Scripture as a touch, sometimes it is represented as hearing. "Incline your ear and come unto Me. Hear and your soul shall live." There is a link between you and me tonight in the fact that I speak and you hear. Well, a spiritual connection, of which this is the analogy, if it is set up between Christ and you, will cure you of your sin. Sometimes this contact is described as being formed by a look. This is the favorite symbol. "Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." It is apparently a very meager connection which is set up by a glance, and yet if you have such a contact between you and Christ as the eye made between the dying Israelite and the brazen serpent, it will save you. Here in this narrative the contact is symbolized by a touch. The patient by her touch was linked with Jesus, and felt in her body that she was healed of her plague.

Now, do you not wish to touch Jesus and to be made whole, that is, holy? If you do, remember that the touch must be a voluntary one. If any of you were brought into a supposed connection with Christ when you were children, without consciousness of what was done, I charge you do not put any confidence in the ceremony. Religion performed for you, when you were unconscious and gave no consent to it, cannot possibly save you. Whatever there might be in it, there is nothing saving in it. You must come into a voluntary union with Jesus if you would be made whole. It must be an intentional contact. Some were pressed against the Savior as they pushed against each other and as the crowd surged to and fro, but this woman was not driven against Christ without her consent. Oh no, she was eager to get at Him. She pushed, she struggled, and at last, she reached the fringe of His mantle, and a contact was established intentionally by her finger. She wished to be made whole and she touched Christ with that view. You, too, must come to Jesus with the view of being delivered from the guilt, penalty, and power of sin, and you must get into contact with Christ with the intent that He should be your Savior. I entreat you to see to this, and may the Holy Spirit lead you to do it at once.

"Oh," you say, "but I do not know how to get into contact with the Savior." The best way, the only way, is by believing in Him. If you, tonight, say in your heart, "I trust Christ to save me," there is immediately a contact between you and Christ of the right kind, you are the trusting one, and He is the person trusted in. There is a point of union between you and Christ and this will save you, for there never was one yet that did wholly trust the blood and righteousness of Jesus without finding himself fully justified in so trusting. The rule of the kingdom is—"According to your faith so be it unto you." If your faith is only as a grain of mustard seed, if it is genuine faith, it shall work in you the cure of your soul's disease, and you shall live unto righteousness. The point of contact is a main consideration, and I pray you look to it. Do you not see that when the woman's finger touched Christ's garment there was established at once a connection between the two, along which the divine virtue flashed? I will not illustrate this by electricity, for such a figure will suggest itself to you all, but the fact is that faith sets up a contact between the sinner and Christ, and through this the healing virtue comes to us.

Faith on our part is an act of reception. We agree to receive Christ as what God has made Him to be, a propitiation for sin. We accept Him as our Savior, Teacher, Leader, Ruler, and in all these senses He is ours. Whatever God the Father says that Jesus is, we agree that He is that, and we take Him to ourselves to be all that to us. Especially since He has come to save His people, we accept Him as our Savior. I have sometimes quoted to you the words of Luther, who often put a truth so broadly that he overshadowed

owed other truths, and uttered language which would not bear to be closely looked into, though most fit to set forth his immediate meaning. Luther says, "I will have nothing to do with saving myself. Jesus Christ is a Savior; I leave my soul wholly in His hands." That puts it very broadly, but it is what I mean within a little, that is to say, you must just go and say, "I cannot deliver myself from the power of sin, but I know that Jesus can deliver me and I put myself into His hands that He may do it." When faith thus unites us to Jesus, the healing virtue will flow from Him to us.

"Oh, well," says one, "I have often heard you preach about being saved from sinning by Christ, but I do not feel that I can do anything." Just so, that is why I want you to get Christ to work in you, and for you. "Oh, but I am nobody." That is the very sort of person I delight to find, that Jesus Christ may make you into somebody, and say, "Somebody has touched Me." Nobody is made into somebody when he once touches Jesus Christ. "Oh, but I am—" There will be no end to these objections, and therefore let me say plainly, never mind what you are. The question is, "What is the Lord Jesus Christ?" If He is able to save you, trust Him, rely upon Him, and rest your soul with Him. Did I hear one reply, "I do not see how that will make me better"? My speedy answer is that faith, simple as it seems, is the one thing which, by God's grace, shall make you a new man. Here is the philosophy of it—if you trust Jesus, you will love Him, if you love Him, you will serve Him. Believing that Jesus has saved you, gratitude springs up in your heart and becomes the motive power by which a new life is begun and continued. I pray you try it. I remember years ago when I tried the power of faith in Jesus. It was a poor, feeble, trembling touch that I gave to Christ, but by it from sadness and despair I rose to gladness and hope. I had something to live for, and I had the expectation of being able to accomplish it, too, when I had touched Him. And at this hour, when I am sick and sad and sorry and sinful, I go to Him, and I am blest. If I need washing, He must wash me. If I need clothing, He must clothe me. If I need strength, He must invigorate me. He is all in all to my soul, and so I do but tell you what I know myself, and persuade you by my own experience to Him.

III. Lastly, the poor woman, having touched the hem of Christ's garment, and being made whole, was about to slink away, when the Master asked THE REMARKABLE QUESTION which brought her to the front, so that she was obliged to confess what Christ had done for her.

I would to God that all of you who have felt the power of Christ would bear testimony to the fact. As a rule those who have been converted in this place have not been backward to confess Christ, but still, some among you who love my Lord have never yet avowed your attachment to Him. You are on Christ's side, but you do not wear His uniform, and acknowledge His cause. You do not confess Him, though He has promised that those who do so, He will confess at the last. We are all too fond of ease, and so it happens in this world of ours, that much of the force of goodness remains unused because men are inactive and retiring. Who covets the front of the battle? Only a bold, brave man whose heart God has touched. He comes to the front, and remains the butt of opposition when prudence might dictate that he should shelter himself from the conflict. Oh, my dear friend, if you love Jesus Christ, my Master, I ask you never to be ashamed to be on His side, and on the side of the right and the true, the just, and the kind. Take your place like a man, and avow yourself a soldier of the cross. Too many are like the timid woman of our text; they receive benefits from Jesus, and then try to lose themselves in the crowd. I will tell you a little about that.

The touch that brings virtue out of Christ is one that cannot be perceived by our fellow men. That young man over yonder touched Christ tonight, but he who sits close to him is not aware of it. The saving act is done in secret, and sometimes it is almost a secret to the person himself. He hardly dares to think that he has been so bold. This poor woman shrank into herself, she knew that she was cured, but she was afraid to think of what she had done to get the cure. I have known many poor souls believe in Christ and yet feel as if it were presumption to do so. It appears to a truly humbled conscience to be so great a mercy to be forgiven, that it feels hardly justified in daring to think that Jesus could have put away its sin. Listen to me, you who are trembling. Let not your fears rob your Lord of His honor. You must confess your faith, for Jesus loves that those whom He heals should acknowledge it. That is why He turned round and said, "Who touched My clothes?" He delights in that tender acknowledgment, wet with many tears. If you have done good to one of your neighbors, you think it hard if no word of thanks

is spoken. I have known benevolence almost shriveled up for lack of gratitude. My Master is not of such a temper, but still He welcomes words of humble acknowledgment. He loves to hear the bleating of the sheep which His shoulders have brought back to the fold. He loves that much love comes of having much forgiven. Do not, then, hold your tongue. If Jesus has indeed healed you, tell Him of it, and tell His people of it to His praise. Such grace ought to be known. Is there anything to be ashamed of? For my part I glory in being saved by Christ. If he that is a Christian is a fool, write me down among the fools. Say you not so, poor working brother? When you go into the workshop and they say, "These Christian people are a set of hypocritical Presbyterians," will you not answer, "Then put me down among them"? If your Lord and Master did not grudge to stand in the stocks for you till they spit in His face, what a coward you must be if you ever draw back from avowing your faith in Him from the fear of ridicule. If He acknowledged your cause even unto death, never blush to be regarded as His follower. Let every cowardly thought be banished from your spirit. If Jesus saved you from going down into the pit and made you a new creature, never be ashamed in any company to say, "Christ has made me whole and therefore I am His."

From that day, the healed woman and Jesus had instituted a friendship that never ended. They had conversed together, and their lives were openly linked together. Would you not wish the same thing to happen to you?

To this woman Christ said, "Go in peace." What a blessing she gained by being fetched out of her hiding place, for had she gone away without an open confession, she might often have been disturbed in mind by the fear that a stolen cure would not be permanent. The Master said, "Go in peace," and a profound calm fell upon her spirit, as when the sea birds sit on the waves and all the winds have fallen into a deep sleep. She was a happy woman from that day, for Jesus had said, "Go in peace," and what could trouble her?

Now, it may be that some of you who love Christ will go to heaven safely enough. But you will miss a mint of comfort on the road because you have never openly confessed that you belong to Christ. Perhaps certain of you will never get peace till you acknowledge your discipleship, and link your whole life with Jesus. When you do that, and take up His cross with all its shame, and are known to be a Christian in every society into which you enter, then shall your peace be like a river.

I have done, only I would put to the whole congregation the question, "Who has touched Christ tonight?" O that some would answer in their hearts, "I have touched Him tonight by faith." Why should you not all trust the appointed Savior? Do you tell me that you do not understand what faith is? It is, trusting—trusting wholly upon the person, work, merit, and power of the Son of God. Some think this trusting to be a strange business, but indeed it is the simplest thing that can possibly be. To some of us, truths which were once hard to believe are now matters of fact, about which we should find it hard to doubt. If one of our grandfathers were to rise from the dead, and come into the present state of things, what a deal of trusting he would have to do. He would say tomorrow morning, "Where are the flint and steel? I need a light." And we should give him a little box with tiny pieces of wood in it, and tell him to strike one of them on the box. He would have to trust a good deal before he would believe that fire would thus be produced. We would next say to him, "Now that you have a light, turn that tap and light the gas." He sees nothing, but is annoyed with an offensive smell. How can he believe that light will come of that invisible vapor? And yet it does. "Now come with us, grandfather. Sit in that chair. Look at that box in front of you. You shall have your likeness directly." "No, child," he would say "it is ridiculous. The sun takes my portrait? I cannot believe it." "Yes, and you shall ride 50 miles in an hour without horses." "I do not believe it," he says. "What is more, you shall speak to your son in New York, and he shall answer you in a few minutes." Should we not astonish the old gentleman? Would he not need all his faith? And yet these things are believed by us without effort, because experience has made us familiar with them. Faith is greatly needed by you who are strangers to spiritual things. You seem lost while we are talking about them, and our very words puzzle you. But oh, how simple it is to us who have the new life and have communion with spiritual realities. We have a Father to whom we speak and He hears us, and a blessed Savior who hears our heart's longings, and helps us in our struggles against sin. It is all plain to him that understands. May the Spirit of God bring every one of you to understand it! What a joy

it would be, if we all touched the Savior, should all be healed of sin, and all be admitted to stand at His right hand forever. Then, whoever we may be, and however much we may differ in rank and talent, we shall all heartily join to sing the new song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.”

EXPOSITION

Mark 5:21-43.

Verses 21, 22—*And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, many people gathered unto Him: and He was nigh unto the sea. And, behold, there comes one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet.*

Paying our Lord respect and deference, as was His due. See here an instructive sight, the law at the feet of the gospel. This is the place for the law. The best work the law can do is to bring us to the feet of Jesus. The elder had an earnest request to make, and therefore he put himself into a lowly, suppliant position. We too shall succeed in prayer when we plead with all humility, bowing in the dust before the Lord.

23, 24—*And besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lies at the point of death: I pray You, come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and many people followed Him, and thronged Him.*

We are told elsewhere that this was his only daughter, and twelve years of age. All the father's heart was set upon her, his life was wrapped up in the child's life. She was now *in extremis*. She must die unless the great Teacher will come and raise her up to health again. There was faith in this ruler, and therefore we read, “And Jesus went with him.” Faith ensures the aid of Jesus without delay, and if you and I can trust Him, He will go with us. Friend, can you rely on Jesus? Then shall it be written of you also, “And Jesus went with him.”

25—*And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years.*

In this passage of our Lord's life He blesses two women—the damsel sick unto death, and the matron sorely diseased. A large portion of the cures that Jesus worked were upon men, but those worked upon women are nearly all especially noteworthy. Surely of miracles of a spiritual kind the women have a double share. This poor woman had been a sufferer for twelve years, that is to say, just as long as the damsel had lived. How many, only live to suffer, their existence being little better than a protracted wasting away.

26, 27—*And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind and touched His garment.*

“When she had heard of Jesus.” “Faith comes by hearing.” My dear hearers, whatever you do not hear, take care that you hear much of Jesus. Some preach the church, it were better by far if they preached the church's Head. Some preach up a creed, it is wiser to proclaim Him who is the essence of the creed. Attend those places where most is said of Christ, for it is by hearing of Him that you will be blest as this poor woman was. That which she heard brought her to Jesus and coming to Jesus is the great thing to be desired. When she had heard of Jesus, she determined to obtain for herself the healing which He was able to bestow. Have you no such resolve?

28—*For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.*

Not “If I may but touch His clothes,” as if she meant to lay stress on the mere touch. The translators were wise to place the “but” after the “touch,” for there the emphasis rests. The woman believed that Jesus was full of healing energy everywhere even in His garments, and therefore she felt—“If I may touch but His clothes, I shall thus come into contact with Him and I shall be whole.” Nor did she rest content with theory, she carried it out into act, she pressed through the throng and touched the border of His garment, as Luke informs us. O that all good intentions were as promptly turned into actions!

29—*And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.*

“Straightway.” Mark is very fond of that word “straightway” or “immediately.” And truly the instantaneous action of our Lord at the call of faith is so remarkable that we do not wonder that the evangelist should record it. Are there not sick souls here who would gladly obtain an immediate salvation? A touch of Jesus will win it.

30, 31—*And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue [or power] had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press and said, Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said to Him, You see the multitude thronging You, and say You, Who touched Me?*

Peter led the way in this remark, acting as the spokesman for the rest. Jesus is always right, even when to the eye of sense, He appears to be wrong. We ought never to suspect Him of making a mistake, indeed, for us to question Him would be great presumption.

32—*And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing.*

He knew who it was; evidently He looked for “her.” He looked round, not to make a discovery of what was unknown, but to look on one whom He would gently bring out of her hiding place. Taking a long and steady gaze around the multitude He at last singled her out.

33—*But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him and told Him all the truth.*

Here is another instructive sight. Just now we saw the law at Christ’s feet and here we have a needy sufferer at Christ’s feet. What a picture! If the ruler of the synagogue had a right to be at Jesus’ feet, much more this poor healed one who owed everything to Him. Oh, you that have been saved by Jesus, worship Him, fall at His feet with reverence, sit there with attention and abide there in obedience.

34, 35—*And He said unto her, Daughter, your faith has made you whole; go in peace, and the whole of your plague. While He yet spoke, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Your daughter is dead: why trouble you the Master any further?*

The word for “trouble” is a very strong one, as if they judged it to be exacting on the ruler’s part to take the Savior to his house. Surely it implies that there were such signs of weariness upon our Lord that friendly minds judged it to be troubling Him to induce Him to struggle through the crowd to the house. Sometimes these side lights reveal more of the condition of the Man of Sorrows than the narrative actually records. Ah, there is no fear of troubling Jesus now; it is His joy to visit where He is prayed to come.

36—*As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.*

As much as to say—“That is all you can do, and all you need do. Just trust Me. Be not staggered if death itself is there. I am greater than death.” Would our Lord have spoken thus, if He had not been conscious of infinite power, conscious indeed of His Deity? How say some among you that He is not the Son of God? Assuredly He speaks the language of omnipotence. These are not the words of a mere man. Hear them and practice them—“Be not afraid. Only believe.”

38—*And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And He went to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and saw the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.*

That is to say, the hired mourners who came there to mimic sorrow. Everything false and hired must go out when Jesus enters to work his wonders.

39—*And when He was come in, He said unto them, Why make you this ado and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleeps.*

She was not dead for good and all. He knew that she was dead for the time, but He spoke broadly, looking at the future. And in His sense she was not dead, since in a few moments she would be among them alive. Her brief death was in effect no death, but a mysterious sleep.

40—*And they laughed Him to scorn.*

How this sentence ought to encourage any who, in doing right, meet with disgrace and reproach. “They laughed HIM to scorn.” Will you ever think it hard that you should be ridiculed when the Lord, the Prince of Glory, is laughed to scorn? No, my brethren, say in your hearts—

“If on my face for Your dear name

*Shame and reproaches be,
All hail reproach and welcome shame,
If You remember me.”*

40—*But when He had put them all out.*

And here is another flash of Deity. Did you ever notice how the Lord Jesus frequently does things which are perfectly unaccountable if performed by a mere man, as when He went into the temple and cleared out the buyers and sellers with a scourge of small cords? And when in Gethsemane He only said, “I am He,” and they fell backward? Here, again, He put out of the room all the minstrels and hired mourners. Does it not show that occasionally majesty flashed from the human person of Christ which overwhelmed everybody, and was perfectly irresistible? Yes, in His deepest humiliation our Lord had a glory about Him which revealed the indwelling God.

40—*He took the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with them, and entered in where the damsel was lying.*

Christ and death together in one room. A grand picture! Look at the pale, dead child and the life-giving Lord. We know what the issue will be when our Lord enters the lists with the last enemy.

41—*And He took the damsel by the hand.*

That chill, motionless hand! See how the maiden lies before Him like a dew-laden lily wet with the damps of death.

41—*And said unto her, Tabitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto you, arise.*

He spoke to her in her own dear mother tongue. How sweet to be recalled to life by sounds, which were so familiar. There is something homely about all the calls of heavenly love.

42, 43—*And straightway the damsel arose and walked, for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And He charged them that no man should know it.*

He did not wish to have this miracle published. There were reasons why, just then, there should not be much noise made by His miracles. Besides, our blessed Savior was ever gentle and modest, as it is written, “He shall not strive or cry, or cause His voice to be heard in the streets.” He sought not honor of men. Let us do nothing with the view of its being blazoned abroad.

43—*And commanded that something should be given her to eat.*

This command is natural enough, but how singularly it follows a miracle. Could not He who gave her back to life have satisfied her appetite without food? Yes, but Jesus is always cautious of His miracles, and this is the mark of the true Christ. Look at antichrist, and see her lavish marvels at Lourdes, and a thousand shrines—shovelfuls of them. Paul speaks of these signs and lying wonders as the trademark of the mystery of iniquity. But the Christ works no needless miracle, He pauses where the need of the supernatural ceases. He also teaches us this lesson, that when He gives spiritual life it is our duty to furnish it with suitable nutriment of divine truth. We should teach and console those who are newly born into the household of faith. Especially is this the duty of parents and those who are our fathers in the church. Let us not fail to obey our Lord’s precept, and may God thus bless the reading of his Word to us.

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